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WRC TV NBC Network

NBC Nightly News

Washington, DC

October 17, 1995 7 PM

CIA Spying On Japanese Trade Negotiators

BROADCAST EXCERPT

TOM BROKAW: We don't know what the CIA position is on US troops in Bosnia, but we do know a good deal more tonight about the spy agency helping American car companies trying to get a better deal with Japan. And Japan is not happy.

Here's NBC's Andrea Mitchell.

ANDREA MITCHELL: In Tokyo today, Chevy Cavalier, the first American compacts to be sold by a Japanese car company in Japan. The breakthrough Toyota/GM deal was agreed to at trade talks in Geneva last June. US officials now confirm to NBC, American negotiator Mickey Kantor had a big, secret, and now controversial advantage over his Japanese counterparts. Kantor knew Japan's bottom line bargaining position.

As first reported by the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times, the US used electronic eavesdropping to listen in when the Japanese Trade Minister reported back to Tokyo. Japan has protested to Washington. But NBC News has learned spying on the car talks was only one example.

February, 1994. The President meets the Japanese Prime Minister in the Oval Office. A trade war is brewing. Three days earlier the Prime Minister had sent a secret emissary to see Mr. Clinton and try to resolve a dispute.

NBC News has learned that when the special envoy got back here to his hotel and called Tokyo the US intercepted his call. The White House had a transcript within hours.

And that's not all. The Miami summit later that year. The President meets with heads of state from all over the hemisphere. What the foreign leaders didn't know, what NBC has been told, the

super secret National Security Agency had, quote, "wired the place" to eavesdrop on the President's guests. In fact, the US listens in on governments and businesses around the world, friend and foe alike. The cost, \$10 billion a year.

ROGER ALTMAN (Former Deputy Treasury Secretary): And it can be quite helpful in terms of information as to where your counterpart or your adversary is, or what that person's thinking, what that team is thinking.

MITCHELL: This is more than a small diplomatic flap. Japan's trade negotiator is the next likely Prime Minister.

(Quoting Ryurto Hashimoto, Japanese Trade Minister) This is certainly not a pleasant matter, he said.

AMBASSADOR MICKEY KANTOR (US Trade Representative): We have never in this Administration commented in any on intelligence matters. Next question.

MITCHELL: In defense, US officials tell NBC everyone spies, but that they add. we do it better.

Andrea Mitchell, NBC News, Washington.



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